

As Jesus headed for the Mount of Olives with his disciples, fully aware that His crucifixion was soon to come, He prayed, not only for Himself and for His disciples, but also for all those who would believe on Him through their word.

I. *Jesus prayed that future believers would have unity (17:20-23).*

1. *This unity is based upon faith in Jesus as presented in the gospel message.*

It excludes mere organizational unity or merely sharing a common task, but demands true belief on Jesus Christ. Jesus is praying for those who believe in Him through the word of the disciples.

2. *This unity is a self-revealing work of God.*

- a. It is comparable to the unity of the Godhead.
- b. It arises out of the gift of the Son's glory.

The glory of God can be described as a manifestation of God's character or person. Jesus displayed such glory even while on earth (cf. John 1:14; 2:11). Jesus especially revealed the person or character of God the Father. The glory which Jesus had was the manifestation of the Father. We share His glory in that we are seated with Christ in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6) and reveal the character of Christ to the world around us.

3. *This unity is maturing.*

As we grow spiritually, spiritual unity among believers should also grow. Cf. 1 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:13-16. We will be perfected unto unity as God's truth and God's love are mutually applied within the Body.

4. *This unity is persuasive.*

- a. It is observable by the world.
- b. It is purposed to reveal the identity of Jesus.

Being sent by God is used by Jesus in John to mean that, having come from God, He spoke the words of God and did those things which God wanted and empowered. Cf. 3:34; 8:18-29. See also 1:18 – Jesus, having come into the world, is the One who has made God known (1:18).

II. *Jesus prayed that future believers would experience His transforming glory (17:24-26).*

1. *Coming to know God will result in being indwelt by Christ and by the love of God for Christ (vv 25-26).*

- a. Knowing God is possible only because the Son makes known the Father.

Cf. John 1:18. Jesus is the perfect revealer of God and He does reveal God. When a person truly believes, when they have become a child of God (1:12), it is only a result of Jesus having made known the Father. At that point Jesus comes to indwell that believer and fill that child of God with the very love of God.

- b. Believers are not only the object of God's love, they are transformed into loving persons.

God's love is present in believers. All of God's children have His love in them, which should demonstrate itself in their love for one another. Cf. 1 John. Anyone who loves God, will truly love his brother. God's love in us transforms us into people who can love others as Christ has loved us. Cf. Romans 8:29.

2. *Because of the love of God for the Son, Jesus could ask that true believers be in His presence and behold His glory.*

This points first of all to the culmination of our redemption, when we meet Jesus face to face. See 1 John 3:1-2. Yet even now we see a partial, distorted image of His glory and are being transformed into the same image. Cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18. We see the glory of Jesus in Scripture. As we contemplate these things and let God renew our minds, we are transformed. The partial and distorted will one day be replaced by a face to face encounter, when we shall fully know, even as we are fully known by God now. Cf. 1 Corinthians 13:9-12.

These things were on the heart of Jesus, even as He headed to the cross. Though he was aware of the agony facing Him, He prayed for us that we would be one and that we would be in His presence, seeing His full glory. His death and resurrection made these requests possible. Jesus has made God's children one, yet we are responsible to keep that unity, to love one another even as Christ loved us.